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Making The Grade #33: Did the Pilgrims Have Bathrooms?

12/20/2016

[0 Comments](#)

Archives

[May 2019](#)
[February 2019](#)
[December 2018](#)
[June 2018](#)
[March 2018](#)
[October 2017](#)
[June 2017](#)
[May 2017](#)
[March 2017](#)
[December 2016](#)
[October 2016](#)
[September 2016](#)
[August 2016](#)
[June 2016](#)
[May 2016](#)
[February 2016](#)
[January 2016](#)
[November 2015](#)
[October 2015](#)
[August 2015](#)
[June 2015](#)
[May 2015](#)
[April 2015](#)



[March 2015](#)
[February 2015](#)
[January 2015](#)
[December 2014](#)
[November 2014](#)
[October 2014](#)
[September 2014](#)
[August 2014](#)
[July 2014](#)
[June 2014](#)
[May 2014](#)
[April 2014](#)
[March 2014](#)
[February 2014](#)

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Did the Pilgrims have bathrooms?

Many of us- myself included- tend to think of the 1600's as a time when humorless people in pilgrim-style hats would sit around and say things like:

"I doth go to the washroom posthaste".

And yes- I am aware that there was no indoor plumbing in the 1600s. That is what we creative types call, "poetic license".

But while reading an antiques publication recently, this image stopped me dead in my tracks:

(see above)

It depicts the fire that swept through the Amsterdam City Hall in 1652, the same year Massachusetts silver coinage began. Even though it is a horrific scene of destruction, I found it fascinating to see images of what life might have really been like - as opposed to the Norman Rockwell view of that time that has been seared onto our brains.

Coins do that for me as well. What is that you say? Some people counterfeited coins back in colonial times? And clipped the edges to save a little silver from each coin they handled? And they hoarded coins because they didn't know how the Civil War would turn out? And used mostly foreign coins in commerce because the US mint did not produce nearly enough coins to satisfy the needs of the nation during our first few decades? These little tidbits of information help me paint a more accurate, more vivid picture of their lives, not the whitewashed version we learned in school.

Maybe that's why one of my favorite expressions is:

"In times like these, it is helpful to remember that there have always been times like these"

-Paul Harvey

The "Making the Grade" Featured Coin

1652 Pine Tree Shilling. PCGS graded VF30.

Small planchet. Noe-19, Salmon 5-B, considered to be rarity-5. 70.53 grains, per the PCGS tag. Perfectly centered and full dentillation on both sides. Quite a tough die variety, though you are paying little or no premium for that. \$4800.

New Listings

1901 Indian Cent. PCGS graded Proof-65 Brown.

A stunner, quite possibly from an original proof set. As noted Indian cent expert Rick Snow has said – many of these vibrantly blue toned Indian cent proofs were wrapped in sulphur-containing paper by mint workers prior to being mailed to those who ordered them. Often the paper was discarded once received. Occasionally it is retained, and this can be the result. This coin has an Eagle Eye seal of approval, though it will have to be re-stickered by Mr. Snow. In addition – this coin is accompanied by PCGS TrueView images. \$995.

1970-S Lincoln Cent. Small Date. NGC graded Proof-66 Red & Brown.

Rainbow toning at the periphery. Very unusual as such. \$195.

1908 Liberty Nickel. PCGS graded MS62.

Stunning gold, green, blue and red pastel coloration – so unusual on Liberty nickels. \$250.

1825 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded AU55.

O-106, considered to be rarity-2. A ring of deep gold at the periphery fades to near white at the centers. \$595.

1833 Bust Half Dollar. PCGG graded XF45.

Deep blue and gray toning, with some dirt still hiding in some of the letters. This coin is accompanied by PCGS TrueView images. \$275.

1899-O Barber Half Dollar. PCGS graded AU55.

Another freshly graded coin from an old-time collection. Just back from PCGS, and with a fresh TrueView image to boot. Some AU55 Barber halves look XF at first glance; this AU55 looks fully uncirculated at first blush. \$850.

1878-S Trade Dollar. PCGS graded VF35.

I purchased this coin raw from an antique dealer and sent it in myself. Just a choice, original coin. \$250.

1925 Peace Dollar. PCGS MS66 CAC.

Stunning green obverse toning over booming luster. Oh man – beautiful toning on a Peace dollar is as rare as civil discourse about our president-elect. \$1200.

World Coins, Exonumia, Flotsam & Jetsam**1653 Austria Thaler. NGC graded MS61.**

Salzburg. Davenport-3504. A blue-green stunner. There is tremendous value in hand selected silver dollar size European coinage of the 1600's through the 1700's like this one. \$975.

Group of Four 17th Century Contemporary Counterfeit Irish Tokens. [Uncertified].

Forgeries and fantasies of Irish tokens from the 1600's. Consists of: Nottingham, John Blunt; Thomas Burrowes (2); together with a lead squeeze coupling the rev. of John Trewman's Nottingham token with the obverse of a Halfpenny of Philip Allen of Highgate. An interesting study group, both to learn more about this tumultuous time in Irish history and to research any possible connections with the enigmatic St. Patrick's coinage that circulated here in America. \$295.

(ca. 1748)) Am I Not A Man And A Brother Ceramic Medallion. 28 x 30 mm Oval.

Produced in Wedgwood's "Black Basalt" composition. Kneeling slave in chains, hands clasped, with legend AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER? around. Reverse inscribed WEDGWOOD / MADE IN / ENGLAND / 57 1748 / EC . Neatly broken in two from 2:00 to 8:00, otherwise nearly as made. \$95.

1778 Contemporary Counterfeit 2 Reales. Very Fine [uncertified].

Kleeberg Unlisted. Silvered base metal. Crude portrait on this exceedingly rare variety. Mike Ringo considered it unique, and to the best of my knowledge it remains so. Ex. Mike Ringo Estate; Stack's Schaumburg Sale 6/2009:102; Stack's 11/2012:6905; private collection. \$395.

1783 Washington and Independence Electrotpe. Uncirculated [uncertified].

A well made example of popular colonial Washingtonia. \$95.

1786 Non Vi Virtute Vici. Electrotpe. Very Fine [uncertified].

An excellent, high quality electrotpe of this rare colonial pattern. As a genuine specimen it would cost you the better part of \$100k. Mercifully, you can fill this hole in your collection for even less right here. \$295.

1787 Contemporary Counterfeit 2 Reales. Very Fine [uncertified].

Kleeberg 87A-M2. Brass. Lovely in its own crude way. \$295.

1848 Silver Medal of the Covered Market in Brussels, Belgium by Jacques Wiener. Uncirculated [uncertified].

You've got your usual obverse scene of an angel stabbing the devil in the mouth with a giant sword. And for contrast on the reverse you have a 3 dimensional view of the interior of the famous covered market in Brussels. This market is still in existence today. Though it has been updated over the years, you can still see the similarity. This medal is in silver and is smaller than the large Cathedral medals engraver Jacques Wiener is most famous for. At 30mm and 10 grams of silver, it is a little larger than a US half dollar. \$175.

"1850" Dated \$50 Gold Slug Imitation. Uncirculated [uncertified].

Looped at the top for suspension. One of the many different variants of this popular design. Very likely a 20th century concoction. \$65.

1854 Mexico 8 Reales. Genuine Coin; Fake Counterstamp. Extremely Fine [uncertified].

This is a coin that was altered by adding a fake countermark, designed to fool collectors. This was likely done a few decades ago, as there was a little group of these that surfaced in the 1950's or 1960's, as I recall. A great example to add to your reference collection.\$120.

1858 Cathedral Medal - Pantheon St. Eglise in Paris - by Jacques Wiener. Uncirculated [uncertified].

59 mm, Bronze. Van Hoydonck-159. A large domed cathedral in Paris that began construction in 1757-8. Rich chestnut brown color and slightly reflective surfaces. \$295.

1864 Cathedral Medal - Hagia St. Sophia in Constantinople - by Jacques Wiener. Uncirculated [uncertified].

59 mm, Bronze. Van Hoydonck-206. Considered one of the 7 man-made wonders of the world, this famous cathedral was built in 532. Added to and rebuilt a number of times over the years, it was also converted to a mosque for a period of time. It is now a museum and major tourist attraction in what is now Istanbul. The medal shows two views of the elaborate interior of this medal -- a key to the Wiener medal series. I have been fortunate to offer 2 of the most desirable Wiener cathedral medals in as many months. Sometimes it is better to be lucky than smart. \$1100.

1924 and Undated Contemporary Counterfeit Standing Liberty Quarters. Lot of 2. Fine or Better [uncertified].

These two cast counterfeits are much nicer casts than are typically seen, which is why I am offering them. The specimen with the indistinct date sports beautiful concentric rings of toning, while the 1924 has lots of detail remaining. \$75.

Coming Soon ...

Several fresh-to-market Massachusetts Silver Pieces

1815 25c with the enigmatic "E" Counterstamp

Two Spectacularly Toned Double Mint Sets

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Making The Grade #32: What Coin Collecting Is All About (Really)

12/13/2016

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Introduction

Below I am offering you some very special holiday treats. And when it comes right down to it – who deserves a treat more than you?

OK, a lot of people probably deserve it way more than you do. We are all pretty fortunate to have the time & resources to

devote to this great hobby of ours. After all, coin collecting is ranked as the #1 greatest hobby in the history of the world, at least according to the survey I just did of my customers.

But on the other hand, you know exactly what you want. And if I've done my job correctly, some of those items that you want (and perhaps a few you didn't know you wanted until you saw them) will be listed for sale below. If not, hopefully you find the presentation worth skimming, as nearly every one of these items cannot be found elsewhere.

Because I found so much boffo stuff, I had to break it up into two newsletters. The second part of the list will go out to you on Monday of next week.

What Coin Collecting is all About (Really)

Recently I was emailing back and forth with a good customer. We were discussing a cool but esoteric medal. [If you must know, we were discussing the 1933 Huey Long 'Toilet Medal'. It's a neat medal with a great back story). During the course of our email string, he sent me something so profound that I asked to reprint it here, so all 4 of my loyal readers could appreciate it. He agreed:

To be honest and serious about what it's supposed to be all about, in February 2015 I purchased a Proof 65 Cameo 1863 dime in a Heritage auction. This coin is not something I normally collect or buy. But for whatever reason, I just kept thinking about that coin: Someone in the midst of the Civil War took the time to buy a proof coin from the mint. Obviously I have no idea who it was. But that person, almost surely a man, and I have something in common. If he died in 1900, he's been dead for 116 years but if we could meet, I expect he and I would be able to talk about coins and collecting.

Given that small fraction of our population that ardently collects coins, I have something more in common with that person than with virtually all of my contemporaries. (Now, I also suspect that I'd vehemently disagree with many of his views, but he and I are both products of our vastly different times.) I've kept that coin on the small coffee table next to where I watch TV ever since it arrived at my house. I look at it reasonably frequently and muse a bit about the person who purchased it and what his life was like.

Now On to the NewP's

As in my previous newsletters, these coins are the items I have gathered over the last few weeks. The plan is to upload all these coins to my website. In the meantime, readers of this newsletter will be the very first to lay eyes on these offerings. By popular demand, I've included photos of the coins where I have them.

The "Making the Grade" Featured Coin

1896 Six Piece Proof Set. NGC graded Proof-65 to 67.

A gorgeous, perfectly matched proof set of the kind that is rarely seen in today's market. Most such sets were broken up during the dawn of the slab era to satisfy collectors in each of these proof series. Even if you don't purchase this, take a moment to see how well matched these coins are. The coins are graded as follows: Cent: Proof-65 Red & Brown; Nickel: Proof-67 Cameo; Dime: Proof-67 Cameo; Quarter: Proof-67 Cameo; Half: Proof-66 Cameo; Dollar: Proof-66 Cameo. Photos of each individual coin in the set will be sent to those seriously interested upon request. \$29,750.

New Listings

(Ca 1670) St. Patrick's Halfpenny.. PCGS graded VF30.

Black 1-B. A nice medium brown, with hard surfaces. The golden splasher over the crown is quite large and well centered. \$2650.

1938 Lincoln Cent. PCGS graded Proof-66+ Red CAC.

This coin is accompanied by a PCGS TrueView Image. Of the 7 coins PCGS has graded at this level, auction records range as high as \$1,880. This one is ... \$985.

1966 Souvenir Cards Presented Personally by Felix Schlag, Designer of the Jefferson Nickel, in Connection with Anniversary Celebrations at Local Banks.

A great go-with piece for a Jefferson nickel collection. Each has a Mint State Jefferson nickel incorporated as part of the design: St. Joseph Valley Bank, Elkart/ Nappanee, Indiana, white card stock, hand-signed by the designer of the nickel, Felix Schlag; and Community State Bank of Dowagiac, Michigan, pale blue card stock, Serial No. 1014, with door prize stub still attached. Felix Schlag died in 1974. \$150.

1835 Bust Dime. PCGS graded AU55.

The best coin to come out of a small group of coins that I purchased here in Connecticut from a non-collector holding. It was found in a drawer with a few other coins of the period. I just got it back from PCGS. It doesn't happen too often any more, but it is always fun to handle a coin that has been in a non-collector hands since it was made. Be the first to add it to a collection. \$475.

1832 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded XF45.

Small Letters. Gorgeous blue, gold and green toning. This coin is accompanied by PCGS TrueView images. \$275.

1834 Bust Half Dollar. PCGS graded AU53.

Large Date, Large Letters Redbook variety. Green, blue and gold toning over lustrous surfaces. \$395.

1926 Indian Quarter Eagle. PCGS graded MS63 CAC.

Yes – this is a common coin. But these are currently so bizarrely cheap that I couldn't resist listing this flashy, lustrous one. \$495.

World Coins, Exonumia, Flotsam & Jetsam**"1652" (ca. 1853) Oak Tree Shilling. Wyatt Copy in Silver. Almost Uncirculated [uncertified].**

Noe-OA, Kenney-3. Medal turn. Glossy surfaces show deep golden-gray toning and excellent eye appeal. Well centered and struck, it appears to have a wavy planchet similar to the original oak tree shillings that Mr. Wyatt was imitating. PCGS# 534621. \$775.

1787 Contemporary Counterfeit 2 Reales. About Uncirculated [uncertified].

Kleeberg 87B-P5. Brass. Believed to be unique. Ex. Mike Ringo Estate; Schaumburg sale Stack's 6/2009:69 at \$747.50; Stack's 11/2012:6916 at \$546.50). How many unique coins that likely circulated in pre-federal America can you buy for less than a grand? Here is one. \$650.

1796 Contemporary Counterfeit 2 Reales. Extremely Fine [uncertified].

Kleeberg-unlisted. The plate coin in the Lorenzo update to Kleeberg, and the finest of the three that are now known (a third specimen of this variety was discovered in October of 2016). Counterfeit two reales don't come much better, regardless of variety. \$495.

1801 Contemporary Counterfeit 2 Reales. Very Fine [uncertified].

Kleeberg 01A-M7. A popular variety due to the backwards 1's in the date. Great pedigree too, and significant, as it was originally purchased from a non-numismatic source in the New York City area, where some theorize these counterfeits were originally made. Ex. New York City jeweler; Mike Ringo Collection; Dennis Wierzba; Stack's 11/2012:6935; private collection. \$195.

1806 Draped Bust Half Dollar With Counterstamp. Very Fine [uncertified].

A richly toned early half dollar with "Wagner" counterstamp in the obverse field. Quite rare to find a counterstamp on a desirable host coin like this. \$950.

1849 Half Eagle "California Prospector" Counter. NGC graded AU58.

A popular issue with the obverse imitating an 1849 half eagle and a reverse showing a gold prospector. A few of these have sold at auction in recent years in the \$800 range. They aren't worth that, but in this high grade they are easily worth ... \$250.

1854 Cathedrale de York. Wiener Cathedral Medal. Uncirculated [uncertified].

Hoydonck-unlisted. 59 mm, bronze. This is the extremely rare variant in French. Unlisted in any reference on the series – this is the first time I've laid eyes on one, much less owned one. A grand opportunity for the collector of these magnificent, intricately detailed medals engraved by the master engraver, Jacques Wiener. \$975.

1854 Seated Quarter With Arrows. J Polhemus Counterstamp. Host Coin About Good. Counterstamp Extremely Fine [uncertified].

J. Polhemus/Druggist/Sacramento, CA. This is an extremely popular counterstamp, largely due to the fact that coins were found with this counterstamp at the bottom of the sea – as a part of the Central America treasure. \$650.

(Ca. 1862) Lovett's Washington Headquarters Series. Baker-194A. GW-488 through GW-497. NGC graded MS64 Brown to MS65 Red & Brown.

During the civil war, George Lovett of New York City issued a series of ten medals featuring the various sites where Washington had established his headquarters during the Revolutionary War. The obverse of each medal has a bust left portrait of Washington in a military uniform with the headquarters building shown on the reverse.

Thanks to Neil Musante's just published, world class two volume set of books entitled, "Medallic Washington", there has been a resurgence of interest in this series. On page 448 of his book he illustrates an ad that George Lovett placed in a February 10, 1862 Bangs, Merwin & Co. sale catalog where these medals were originally sold to collectors. Occasionally I see an offering of one of these medals here and there, but this is the first time I recall seeing a complete set of 10 medals for sale. This set was likely kept together since the time it was issued in 1862.

They feature the second obverse, exhibiting Washington's bust, facing left, inside a border of stars. Included: Chad's Ford MS64 Brown; Dobb's Ferry MS64 Red and Brown; Harlem MS65 Red & Brown; Morristown MS65 Red and Brown; Newburg MS64 Red and Brown; Sufferns MS64 Brown; Tappan MS65 Red & Brown; Valley Forge MS64 Brown; Whitmarsh MS65 Red and Brown; and White Plains MS65 Red and Brown. \$2475.

1873 Seated Half Dollar, With Arrows. Bradley & Smith Counterstamp. Very Fine [uncertified].

A great looking, richly toned example of this rare and desirable counterstamp. It reads: Bradley & Smith/Brushes NY/Asbury Park, NJ. If The Boss (a.k.a. Bruce Springsteen) collects coins, I would bet he has one of these in his collection. \$750

"1781" (2014) Libertas Americana Medal. Paris Mint Restrike. Silver. 5 ounces. Proof- 70 Ultra Cameo (NGC).

A large, impressive, heavy silver medal (as the lead in the movie, Annie Hall might say, "It achieves total heaviosity."). This specimen is serial number 477 of a maximum mintage of 10,000 pieces. \$675.

"1781" (2014) Libertas Americana Medal. Paris Mint Restrike. Silver. 5 ounces. Proof- 69 Ultra Cameo (NGC).

Serial # 891. The same as the above coin, only one grade lower. The original box, COA and wooden case are included here as well. These make great gifts. \$550.

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